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Cy # 7

7 December 1964

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director (Intelligence)
Deputy Director (Science & Technology)
Director, NPIC

SUBJECT : Proposed Steering Group and Task Force
to Look into Possible New Search and/or
Surveillance Satellite Systems

1. You are aware of the NRO proposal as contained in the letter of 19 November from Secretary Vance to Mr. McCone to establish a steering group and a task force for the subject purpose. Attached is a copy of Mr. McCone's reply to Secretary Vance and a copy of paragraph 10 of the minutes as prepared by me of the NRO ExCom Meeting of 1 December. Both have been approved by Mr. McCone.

2. You are directed to utilize the letter and the memorandum for the record as your guidelines for discussion in the steering group and the task force. Specifically, it is DCI's position that those projects now under contract for feasibility studies (i.e., on the part of CIA this would include [redacted] are not included as tasks for the steering group. Furthermore, intelligence needs as established by USIB and COMOR are not a matter of cognizance for the steering group. These Agency positions are made unmistakably clear in Mr. McCone's letter as well as my minutes. Bear in mind that this is an Agency position and presumably is not agreed by Dr. McMillan and Mr. Vance.

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3. You should also note that the terms of reference and operating plan as proposed by Director, NRO, do not have the approval of Mr. McCone. We are awaiting a revision of these papers by DOD in accordance with Mr. McCone's letter to Secretary Vance. Play your cards accordingly.

(Signed) Marshall S. Carter

NRO review(s) completed.

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Marshall S. Carter
Lieutenant General, USA
Acting Director

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3 December 1964

The Honorable Cyrus R. Vance
 Deputy Secretary of Defense
 Washington, D. C.

Dear Gy:

Thank you for your letter of 19 November concerning the development of new reconnaissance systems. I agree with the necessity for a vigorous and searching review of all possibilities to develop new systems or improve existing systems to meet our intelligence requirements. Before proceeding with the establishment of a new board, however, I believe that we should have a clear understanding of the specific questions which require review.

The attachment to your letter suggests that the proposed steering group should examine and determine the information needs to be satisfied by satellite reconnaissance systems. USIB has already established the resolution and swath width of photographic coverage required for general search purposes and the resolution appropriate for "spotting" or "surveillance" purposes. USIB's conclusions in this regard are set forth in USIB-D-41.13/11, approved on 31 July 1964, which were communicated to the NRO. The information needs for satellite reconnaissance thus appear to me to have already been established with sufficient precision to guide our program for systems development and to require no further review at this time. The appropriate committee of USIB has already undertaken, as the result of a USIB decision of 30 October 1964, to formulate long-term intelligence requirements for satellite photographic collection.

The problem remains to determine what systems, as a practical matter, are best calculated to satisfy the informational needs which, as I say above, have already been established. On this point certain feasibility demonstration programs have already been approved by you and me and are under way. These include [redacted]
 [redacted] has been examined by individuals with

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[Redacted]

outstanding technical qualifications, thoroughly familiar with intelligence objectives, who concluded that we should proceed with feasibility studies on both systems. There is, I believe, reason for optimism that further research and testing will show that one or both of the systems under review will provide the practical answer to the requirement which it is designed to meet. When the feasibility studies are completed, we will of course require staff advice and may wish to impanel consultants to help us determine whether the systems meet specifications and should be put into development.

Although our informational needs appear to me to have been established and although work is already proceeding to determine the feasibility of specific systems to satisfy requirements for photography for general search or high resolution spotting purposes, there are doubtless other questions which should be examined. I note that the attachment to your letter includes reference to such questions as vulnerability, reliability, response time, on-orbit control, methods of recovery of data and processing. Moreover, circumstances such as the availability of new boosters or vehicles may suggest the desirability of changing the specifications which determined our earlier decisions with respect to systems feasibility studies. If proposals for alternative systems development are forthcoming, they clearly deserve consideration.

I have no objection to Dr. McMillan's suggestion that a steering group and a task force be established. I am agreeable to CIA participation and will arrange for the necessary personnel to be assigned to both organizations. In doing this I assume that the terms of reference for the task force will be modified to the extent necessary to avoid overlaps or duplications with the charters of existing USIB committees or, for that matter, USIB itself, and that the research and development work now under way on [Redacted] 25X1

[Redacted] will be carried forward to the point agreed by the NRO Executive Committee without interruption or further delay.

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[Redacted]

I am not familiar with the progress being made on [Redacted] but have been advised orally by Dr. J. Wheeler that developments on [Redacted] are considered as favorable and that the evaluation of the work can be expected by about the first of March.

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In agreeing to the establishment of the steering group and the task force I would like to reserve on the details of the "Operating Plan for Study of Search/Surveillance Satellite Reconnaissance" attached to your letter as the pressure of other matters has foreclosed my consideration of this paper which serves as terms of reference for the steering group and hence may have to be modified to meet the conditions mentioned above.

I Sincerely,

Mr. John A. McCone

John A. McCone
Director

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10. Mr. McCone then referred to the proposed establishment of a steering group and a task force to look into overall reconnaissance requirements and plans as proposed in a letter from Vance to McCone and as already implemented by a message from McMillian. Mr. McCone stated his feeling that this task force, if organized, should not duplicate nor overlap studies and areas of responsibility of other Government agencies. He specifically mentioned USIB and COMOR. He referred to the fact that [redacted]

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25X1 [redacted] had already been turned over to contractors for development and that these two studies should not be included in the task force and steering group analysis and that research and development currently under way with contractors should not be disturbed. He said, therefore, that the terms of reference of the task force and the steering group needed to be revised to accord to his desires and he would look forward to seeing the proposed revisions. He also stated his concern that Director, NRO, was addressing invitations directly to Lundahl, the Director of RPIC, when Lundahl was in a chain of command which included Cline, Carter, and himself, Mr. McCone. Such invitations, he said, should therefore come to the Director of Central Intelligence. Mr. Vance pointed out his agreement to Mr. McCone's concerns. Dr. Fubini stated that this task force in fact had been generated by a JCS statement of military requirement for a quick reaction satellite, a requirement based on statements from SAC. The JCS wanted technical advice from the NRO as to whether or not this could be done and Dr. Fubini said he would try to let them know by February 1965. Dr. Fubini made it clear that the whole purpose of the steering group and task force was to address itself to this problem and Mr. McCone pointed out, in accordance with his draft letter, that there might well be other areas that the task force and steering group could look to in the overall interests of the reconnaissance program. (Mr. McCone should forward to Vance his written response as contained in the draft from which he read.) Fubini asked for a copy of the Land report on [redacted] which he said he had never seen. I stated that there was no Land report on [redacted] that there was only a memorandum for the record prepared by our own people based on Dr. Land's report to the DCI and the staff. I said, however, I would check to make sure that I was stating the facts correctly.

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